

WINS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS
LIEUT. W. O. SMITH, OF "WILDCAT" DIVISION, DECORATED FOR GALLANT SERVICE

By R. B. House
N. C. Historical Commission

To the records of the one hundred and seventy-eight North Carolina boys who won the Distinguished Service Cross in the World War, we are proud to add the citation of First Lieutenant William Oliver Smith, of Raleigh. Official notice of his decoration has just reach the Historical Commission from the War Department. Lieutenant Smith was a member of the 81st Division, and at the time of his gallant action this division was part of a French Army Corps. Consequently it was by the French that his action was first cited. On January 21, 1919, he was cited as follows:

DECORATION

Croix de Guerre with Palm
Citation

"With the approbation of the Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, The Marshal of France, Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies of the East, cites in the Order of the Army:

"Lieutenant William O. Smith, of the 318th Machine Gun Battalion, United States Army: An officer brave and full of dash. On the 9th and 10th of November, 1918, he led his section with the waves of Infantry. Capturing a position in the German lines, he defended the conquered ground against forces superior in number during a violent counter-attack, in the course of which he was wounded two times."

At General Headquarters,
"January 21, 1919.

"The Marshall, Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies of the East,
(Signed) PETAIN."

This French corps, however was a part of the American Field Army that was engaged in the Meuse-Argonne drive. Therefore, the citation of Lieutenant Smith by the French Corps was the beginning of recognition that extended to the American army headquarters. The recognition of his brave act is in the following citation carrying the Distinguished Service Cross as the decoration:

"Award of distinguished service cross.--By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved July 9, 1918, (Bul. No. 43, W. D., 1918) a distinguished service cross was awarded by the War Department to the following named officer:

"William Oliver Smith, first lieutenant, Company D, 318th Machine Gun Battalion, 81st Division. For extraordinary heroism in action north of Haudimont, France, November 9-10, 1918. Lieut. Smith courageously led his machine gun platoon in an attack on the afternoon of November 9th, and later assisted in organizing a position for defense. On November 10th, the enemy launched a counter-attack and the infantry withdrew under cover of the machine gun fire. Later, when attacked by greatly superior numbers, Lieut. Smith defended his position an hour. Although wounded three times he persisted in his resistance, holding his position until his ammunition was exhausted, when he was taken prisoner by the enemy. Residence at appointment, 529 N. Wilmington Street, Raleigh, N. C.

"A. G. O. 201."